

'Error coins' are seized by U. S. officials

By Roger Boye

Federal officials have confiscated three proof "error coins" because they believe the rarities were removed illegally from United States Mint offices in San Francisco.

The coins—which were consigned to Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc., for sale in a late March auction—include a mis-struck Lincoln cent that's larger than normal.

"Proof errors are the 'rarest of the rare' among modern error coins," according to the Bowers and Merena auction catalogue.

Mint workers place newly made proof coins in plastic holders for sale to collectors. George E. Hunter, the mint's assistant director for technology, told the hobby newspaper *Coin World* that the enlarged error coins could not fit into the holders and "probably have been illegally issued from the mint and probably are therefore mint property." Workers are supposed to destroy mis-struck proof coins.

Bowers and Merena voluntarily



The Britannia was the experts' choice as "Coin of the Year."

gave the coins to the U.S. Mint, but the company has not publicly identified their owner, according to a Bowers and Merena spokesman.



Great Britain's gold bullion piece—the Britannia—has been named "Coin of the Year" for 1987 by Krause Publications, of Iola, Wis.

Coinage experts from around the world selected the Britannia over five other "new issues," including Uncle Sam's 1987 silver dollar commemorating the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, which was runner-up. Anthony D. Garrett, the British Royal Mint's deputy master and chief executive, will receive the award later this month in New York.